THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE

POPE

1737

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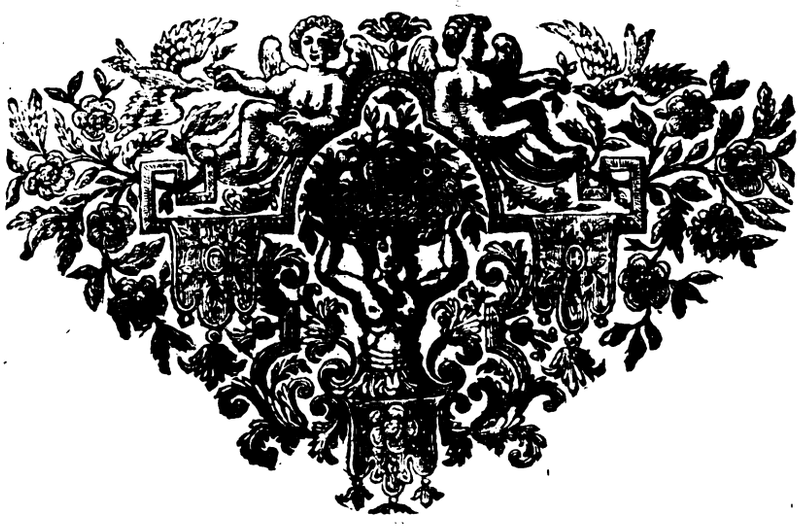
THE
FIRST EPISTLE
OF THE
SECOND BOOK
OF
HORACE,
IMITATED.

Ne Rubeam, pingui donatus Munere! HOR.



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THE *Reflections of* Horace, *and the Judgments paſt in this Epiſtle to* Auguſtus, *ſeem'd ſo ſeaſonable to the preſent Times, that I could not help applying them to the uſe of my own Country. The Author thought them conſiderable enough to addreſs them to His Prince; whom he paints with all the great and good Qualities of a Monarch, upon whom the* Romans *depended for the Encreaſe of an* Abſolute Empire. *But to make the Poem entirely Engliſh, I was willing to add one or two ſuch, as contribute to the Happineſs of a* Free People, *and are more conſiſtent with the Welfare of* our Neighbours.

This Epiſtle will ſhow the learned World to have fallen into two miſtakes; one, that Auguſtus was a Patron of Poets in general; *whereas he not only prohibited all but the Beſt Writers to name him, but recommended that Care even to the Civil Magiſtrate:* Admonebat Prætores, ne paterentur Nomen ſuum obſolefieri, &c. *The other to imagine this Piece to be a* general Diſcourſe of Poetry; *whereas it is an* Apology for the Poets, *in order to render* Auguſtus *more their Patron.* Horace *here pleads the Cauſe of his Cotemporaries, firſt againſt the Taſte of the*

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Town, whose humour it was to magnify the Authors of the preceding Age; secondly against the Court and Nobility, who encouraged only the Writers for the Theatre; and lastly against the Emperor himself, who had conceived them of little use to the Government. He shews (by a view of the Progress of Learning, and the Change of Taste among the Romans) *that the Introduction of the Polite Arts of* Greece *had given the Writers of his Time great advantages over their Predecessors, that their* Morals *were much improved, and the Licence of those ancient Poets restrained: that* Satire *and* Comedy *were become more just and useful; that whatever extravagancies were left on the Stage, were owing to the Ill Taste of the Nobility; that Poets, under due Regulations, were in many respects useful to the* State; *and concludes, that it was upon them the Emperor himself must depend, for his Fame with Posterity.*

We may farther learn from this Epistle, that Horace *made his Court to this Great Prince, by writing with a decent Freedom toward him, with a just Contempt of his low Flatterers, and with a manly Regard to his own Character.*

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THE
FIRST EPISTLE
OF THE
SECOND BOOK of *HORACE.*

[1] WHile You, great Patron of Mankind, ſuſtain
The balanc'd World, and open all the Main;
Your Country, chief, in Arms abroad defend,
At home, with Morals, Arts, and Laws amend;
How ſhall the Muſe, from ſuch a Monarch, ſteal
An hour, and not defraud the Publick Weal?
[2] Edward and Henry, now the Boaſt of Fame,
And virtuous Alfred, a more ſacred Name,

[1] *Cum tot ſuſtineas, &c.*
[2] *Romulus, et Liber pater, &c.*

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After a Life of gen'rous Toils endur'd,
The Gaul ſubdu'd, or Property ſecur'd,
Ambition humbled, mighty Cities ſtorm'd,
Or Laws eſtabliſh'd, and the World reform'd;
Clos'd their long Glories with a ſigh, to find
Th' unwilling Gratitude of baſe mankind!
All human Virtue to its lateſt breath
Finds Envy never conquer'd, but by Death.
The great Alcides, ev'ry Labour paſt,
Had ſtill this Monſter to ſubdue at laſt.
Sure fate of all, beneath whoſe riſing ray
Each Star of meaner merit fades away;
Oppreſs'd we feel the Beam directly beat,
Thoſe Suns of Glory pleaſe not till they ſet.
[3] To Thee, the World its preſent homage pays,
The Harveſt early, but mature the Praiſe:
Great Friend of LIBERTY! in *Kings* a Name
Above all Greek, above all Roman Fame:
Whoſe Word is Truth, as ſacred and rever'd,
As Heav'n's own Oracles from Altars heard.

Wonder

[3] *Præſenti tibi, &c.*

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Wonder of Kings! like whom, to mortal eyes
None e'er has riſen, and none e'er ſhall riſe.
[4] Juſt in one inſtance, be it yet confeſt
Your People, Sir, are partial in the reſt.
Foes to all living worth except your own,
And Advocates for Folly dead and gone.
Authors, like Coins, grow dear as they grow old;
It is the ruſt we value, not the gold.
Chaucer's worſt ribaldry is learn'd by rote,
And beaſtly * Skelton Heads of Houſes quote:
One likes no language but the Faery Queen;
A Scot will fight for † Chriſt's Kirk o' the Green;
And each true Briton is to Ben ſo civil,
He ſwears the Muſes met him at the ‖ Devil.
[5] Tho' juſtly Greece her eldeſt ſons admires,
Why ſhould not we be wiſer than our Sires?

In

---

[4] *Sed tuus hoc populus, &c.*
[5] *Si, quia Græcorum ſunt, &c.*

* Skelton, Poet Laureat to Hen. 8. a Volume of whoſe Verſes has been lately reprinted, conſiſting almoſt wholly of Ribaldry, Obſcenity, and Billingſgate Language.

† Chriſt's Kirk o' the Green, a Ballad made by a King of Scotland.

‖ The Devil Tavern, where Ben. Johnſon held his Poetical Club.

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In ev'ry publick Virtue we excell,
We build, we paint, we ſing, we dance as well,
And learned Athens to our Art muſt ſtoop,
Could ſhe behold us tumbling thro' a hoop.

[6] If Time improve our Wit as well as Wine,
Say at what age a Poet grows divine?
Shall we, or ſhall we not, account him ſo,
Who dy'd, perhaps, an hundred years ago?
End all diſpute; and fix the year preciſe
When Britiſh bards begin t'Immortalize?

" Who laſts a Century can have no flaw,
" I hold that Wit a Claſſick, good in law.

[7] Suppoſe he wants a year, will you compound?
And ſhall we deem him Ancient, right and ſound,
Or damn to all Eternity at once,
At ninety nine, a Modern, and a Dunce?

" We ſhall not quarrel for a year or two;
" By Courteſy of England, he may do.

[8] Then, by the rule that made the Horſe-tail bare,
I pluck out year by year, as hair by hair,

And

[6] *Si meliora dies, ut vina, &c.*
[7] *Quid? qui depetiit minor, &c.*
[8] *Utor permiſſo, caudæque, &c.*

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And melt down Ancients like a heap of ſnow?
While you, to meaſure merits, look in Stowe,
And eſtimating Authors by the year,
Beſtow a Garland only on a Bier.

[9] Shakeſpear *, (whom you and ev'ry Play-houſe bill
Style the divine, the matchleſs, what you will)
For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
And grew Immortal in his own deſpight.
Ben, old and poor, as little ſeem'd to heed
The Life to come, in ev'ry Poet's Creed.
Who now reads Cowley? if he pleaſes yet,
His moral pleaſes, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his Epic, nay † Pindaric Art,
But ſtill I love the language of his Heart.

" [10] Yet ſurely, ſurely, theſe were famous men!
" What Boy but hears the ſayings of old Ben?
" In all debates where Criticks bear a part,
" Not one but nods, and talks of Johnſon's Art,

[9] *Ennius*, (*& ſapiens, & fortis, &c.*
[10] *Adeo ſanctum eſt, &c.*

* Shakeſpear and Ben. Johnſon may truly be ſaid not much to have thought of Immortal Fame, the one in many pieces compoſed in haſte for the Stage; the other in his Latter works in general, which *Dryden* calls his *Dotages*.

† ---*Pindaric* art, which has much more merit than his *Epic*: but very unlike the Character, as well as Numbers, of Pindar.

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" Of Shakeſpear's Nature, and of Cowley's Wit;
" How Beaumont's Judgment check'd what Fletcher writ;
" How Shadwell * haſty, Wycherly was ſlow;
" But, for the Paſſions, Southern ſure and Rowe.
" Theſe, only theſe, ſupport the crouded ſtage,
" From eldeſt Heywood down to Cibber's age.

" All this may be; the People's Voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.
To † Gammer Gurton if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careleſs Huſband praiſe,
Or ſay our fathers never broke a rule;
Why then I ſay, the Publick is a fool.
But let them own, that greater faults than we
They had, and greater Virtues, I'll agree.
Spenſer himſelf affects the ‖ obſolete,
And Sydney's verſe halts ill on Roman feet:

" *Interdum vulgus, &c.*

* *Shadwell haſty, Wycherly was ſlow.*] Nothing was leſs true than this particular: But this Paragraph has a mixture of Irony, and muſt not altogether be taken for Horace's own Judgment, only the common Chatt of the pretenders to Criticiſm; in ſome things right, in others wrong: as he tells us in his anſwer,

Interdum vulgus rectum videt, eſt ubi peccat.

† *Gammer Gurton*, a piece of very low humour, one of the firſt printed Plays in Engliſh, and therefore much valued by ſome Antiquaries.

‖ *Spenſer too much affects the obſolete.*] Particularly in the Shepherd's Calendar, where he imitates the unequal Meaſures, as well as the Language, of Chaucer.

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Milton's ſtrong pinion now not Heav'n can bound,
Now ſerpent-like, in proſe he ſweeps the ground,
In Quibbles, Angel and Archangel join,
And God the Father turns a School-Divine.
Not that I'd lop the Beauties from his book,
Like ſlaſhing Bentley with his deſp'rate Hook;
Or damn all Shakeſpear, like th' affected fool
At Court, who hates whate'er he read at School.

[12] But for the Wits of either Charles's days,
The Mob of Gentlemen who wrote with Eaſe;
Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more,
(Like twinkling Stars the Miſcellanies o'er)
One Simile, that ſolitary ſhines
In the dry Deſert of a thouſand lines,
Or lengthen'd Thought that gleams thro' many a page,
Has ſanctify'd whole Poems for an age.

[13] I loſe my patience, and I own it too,
When works are cenſur'd, not as bad, but new;
While if our Elders break all Reaſon's laws,
Theſe fools demand not Pardon, but Applauſe.

[14] On

[12] —*Sed emendata videri, &c.*
[13] *Indignor quidquam reprehendi, &c.*

[14] On Avon's bank, where flow'rs eternal blow,
If I but aſk, if any weed can grow?
One Tragic ſentence if I dare deride
Which Betterton's grave Action dignify'd,
Or well-mouth'd Booth with emphaſis proclaims,
(Tho' but, perhaps, * a muſter-roll of Names)
How will our Fathers riſe up in a rage,
And ſwear, all ſhame is loſt in George's Age!
You'd think no Fools diſgrac'd the former Reign,
Did not ſome grave Examples yet remain,
Who ſcorn a Lad ſhould teach his Father ſkill,
And, having once been wrong, will be ſo ſtill.
[15] He, who to ſeem more deep than you or I,
Extols old Bards, or Merlin's Prophecy,
Miſtake him not; he envies, not admires,
And to debaſe the Sons, exalts the Sires.
Had ancient Times conſpir'd to diſ-allow
What then was new, what had been ancient now?

Or

[14] *Recti necne* crocum, &c.
[15] *Jam* Saliare Numæ carmen, &c.

* *A muſter-roll of Names.*] An abſurd Cuſtom of ſeveral Actors, to pronounce with Emphaſis the meer *Proper Names* of Greeks or Romans, which (as they call it) *fill the mouth* of the Player.

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Or what remain'd, ſo worthy to be read
By learned Criticks, of the mighty Dead?

[16] In Days of Eaſe, when now the weary Sword
Was ſheath'd, and *Luxury* with *Charles* reſtor'd;
In every Taſte of foreign Courts improv'd,
* "All, by the King's Example, liv'd and lov'd."
Then Peers grew proud in † Horſemanſhip t' excell,
New-market's Glory roſe, as Britain's fell;
The Soldier breath'd the Gallantries of France,
And ev'ry flow'ry Courtier writ Romance.
Then Marble ſoften'd into life grew warm,
And yielding Metal flow'd to human form:
Lely on animated Canvas ſtole
The ſleepy Eye, that ſpoke the melting ſoul.
No wonder then, when all was Love and Sport,
The willing Muſes were debauch'd at Court;
‖ On each enervate ſtring they taught the Note
To pant, or tremble thro' an Eunuch's throat.

[16] *Ut primum poſitis nugari, &c.*

* *A Verſe of the Lord* Lanſdown.

† —— *In Horſemanſhip t'excell. And ev'ry flow'ry Courtier writ Romance.*] The Duke of Newcaſtle's Book of Horſemanſhip: the Romance of *Partheniſſa*, by the Earl of Orrery, and all the French Romances tranſlated by *Perſons of Quality*.

‖ *On each enervate ſtring*, &c.] The Siege of Rhodes by Sir William Davenant, the firſt Opera ſung in England.

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[17] But Britain, changeful as a Child at play,
Now calls in Princes, and now turns away.
Now Whig, now Tory, what we lov'd we hate;
Now all for Pleaſure, now for Church and State;
Now for Prerogative, and now for Laws;
Effects unhappy! from a Noble Cauſe.

[18] Time was, a ſober Engliſhman wou'd knock
His ſervants up, and riſe by five a clock,
Inſtruct his Family in ev'ry rule,
And ſend his Wife to Church, his Son to ſchool.
To worſhip like his Fathers was his care;
To teach their frugal Virtues to his Heir;
To prove, that Luxury could never hold;
And place, on good Security, his Gold.

[19] Now Times are chang'd, and one Poetick Itch
Has ſeiz'd the Court and City, Poor and Rich:
Sons, Sires, and Grandſires, all will wear the Bays,
Our Wives read Milton, and our Daughters Plays,
To Theatres, and to Rehearſals throng,
And all our Grace at Table is a Song.

I,

[17] *Sub nutrice puella velut, &c.*
[18] *Romæ dulce diu fuit, &c.*
[19] *Mutavit mentem populus levis, &c.*

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I, who ſo oft renounce the Muſes, lye,
Not ——'s ſelf e'er tells more *Fibs* than I;
When, ſick of Muſe, our follies we deplore,
And promiſe our beſt Friends to ryme no more;
We wake next morning in a raging Fit,
And call for Pen and Ink to ſhow our Wit.

[20] He ſerv'd a 'Prenticeſhip, who ſets up ſhop;
* Ward try'd on Puppies, and the Poor, his Drop;
Ev'n Radcliff's Doctors travel firſt to France,
Nor dare to practiſe till they've learn'd to dance.
Who builds a Bridge that never drove a pyle?
(Should Ripley venture, all the World would ſmile)
But thoſe who cannot write, and thoſe who can,
All ryme, and ſcrawl, and ſcribble, to a man.

[21] Yet Sir, reflect, the miſchief is not great;
Theſe Madmen never hurt the Church or State:
Sometimes the Folly benefits mankind;
And rarely Av'rice taints the tuneful mind.

Allow

[20] *Navem agere* ignarus *navis timet, &c.*
[21] *Hic error tamen et levis, &c.*

* *Ward.*] A famous Empirick, whoſe Pill and Drop had ſeveral ſurprizing effects, and were one of the principal ſubjects of Writing and Converſation at this time.

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Allow him but his Play-thing of a Pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:
Flight of Caſhiers, or Fires, he'll never mind;
And knows no loſſes while the Muſe is kind.
To cheat a Friend, or Ward, he leaves to Peter;
The good man heaps up nothing but mere metre,
Enjoys his Garden and his Book in quiet;
And then ——a perfect Hermit in his Diet.
[22] Of little uſe the Man you may ſuppoſe,
Who ſays in verſe what others ſay in proſe;
Yet let me ſhow, a Poet's of ſome weight,
And (*tho' no Soldier) uſeful to the State.
What will a Child learn ſooner than a ſong?
What better teach a Foreigner the tongue?
What's long or ſhort, each accent where to place,
And ſpeak in publick with ſome ſort of grace.

I

[22] Militiæ *quanquam piger & malus, &c.*

* *And tho' no Soldier.*] Horace had not acquitted himſelf much to his credit in this capacity; (*non bene relicta parmula,*) in the battle of Philippi. It is manifeſt he alludes to himſelf in this whole account of a Poet's character; but with an intermixrure of Irony: *Vivit ſiliquis & pane ſecundo* has a relation to his Epicuriſm; *Os tenerum pueri,* is ridicule: The nobler office of a Poet follows, *Torquet ab obſcœnis—Mox etiam pectus—Rectè facta refert, &c.* which the Imitator has apply'd where he thinks it more due than to himſelf. He hopes to be pardoned, if, as he is ſincerely inclined to praiſe what deſerves to be praiſed, he arraigns what deſerves to be arraigned, in the 210, 211, and 212th Verſes.

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I ſcarce can think him ſuch a worthleſs thing,
Unleſs he praiſe ſome monſter of a King,
Or Virtue, or Religion turn to ſport,
To pleaſe a lewd, or un-believing Court.
Unhappy Dryden! —— In all Charles's days,
Roſcommon only boaſts unſpotted Bays;
And in our own (excuſe ſome Courtly ſtrains)
No whiter page than Addiſon remains.
[23] He, from the taſte obſcene reclaims our Youth,
And ſets the Paſſions on the ſide of Truth;
Forms the ſoft boſom with the gentleſt art,
And pours each human Virtue in the heart.
Let Ireland tell, how Wit upheld her cauſe,
Her Trade ſupported, and ſupply'd her Laws;
And leave on SWIFT this grateful verſe ingrav'd,
The Rights a Court attack'd, a Poet ſav'd.
Behold the hand that wrought a Nation's cure,
Stretch'd to relieve the Idiot and the Poor *,

E Proud

[23] *Torquet ab obſcœnis, &c.*

* A Foundation for the maintenance of Idiots, and a Fund for aſſiſting the Poor, by lending ſmall ſums of Money on demand.

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Proud Vice to brand, or injur'd Worth adorn,
And ſtretch the Ray to Ages yet unborn.
Not but there are, who merit other palms;
Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with Pſalms;
[24] The Boys and Girls whom Charity maintains,
Implore your help in theſe pathetic ſtrains:
How could Devotion touch the country pews,
Unleſs the Gods beſtow'd a proper Muſe?
Verſe chears their leiſure, Verſe aſſiſts their work,
Verſe prays for Peace, or ſings down Pope and Turk.
The ſilenc'd Preacher yields to potent ſtrain,
And feels that grace his pray'r beſought in vain,
The bleſſing thrills thro' all the lab'ring throng,
And Heav'n is won by violence of Song.
[25] Our rural Anceſtors, with little bleſt,
Patient of labour when the end was reſt,
Indulg'd the day that hous'd their annual grain,
With feaſts, and off'rings, and a thankful ſtrain:
The joy their wives, their ſons, and ſervants ſhare,
Eaſe of their toil, and part'ners of their care:

The

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[24] *Diſceret unde* preces, *&c.*
[25] *Agricolæ priſci, fortes, &c.*

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The laugh, the jeſt, attendants on the bowl,
Smooth'd ev'ry brow, and open'd ev'ry ſoul:
[26] With growing years the pleaſing Licence grew,
And Taunts alternate innocently flew.
But Times corrupt, and Nature, ill-inclin'd,
Produc'd the point that left a ſting behind;
Till friend with friend, and families at ſtrife,
Triumphant Malice rag'd thro' private life.
Who felt the wrong, or fear'd it, took th' alarm,
Appeal'd to Law, and Juſtice lent her arm.
At length, by wholeſom dread of ſtatutes bound,
The Poets learn'd to pleaſe, and not to wound:
Moſt warp'd to Flatt'ry's ſide; but ſome, more nice,
Preſerv'd the freedom, and forbore the vice.
Hence Satire roſe, that juſt the medium hit,
And heals with Morals what it hurts with Wit.
[27] We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms;
Her Arts victorious triumph'd o'er our Arms:
Britain to ſoft refinements leſs a foe,
Wit grew polite, and Numbers learn'd to flow.

* Waller

[26] *Feſcennina per hunc inventa, &c.*
[27] *Græcia capta, ferum victorem, &c.*

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* Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verſe, the full reſounding line,
The long majeſtic march, and energy divine.
Tho' ſtill ſome traces of our ruſtic vein
And ſplay-foot verſe, remain'd, and will remain.
Late, very late, correctneſs grew our care,
When the tir'd nation breath'd from civil war.
[28] Exact Racine, and Corneille's noble fire
Show'd us that France had ſomething to admire.
Not but the Tragic ſpirit was our own,
And full in Shakeſpear, fair in Otway ſhone:
But Otway fail'd to poliſh or refine,
And fluent Shakeſpear ſcarce effac'd a line.
Ev'n copious Dryden, wanted, or forgot,
The laſt and greateſt Art, the Art to blot.
[29] Some doubt, if equal pains or equal fire
The humbler Muſe of Comedy require?
But in known Images of life I gueſs
The labour greater, as th' Indulgence leſs.

Obſerve

[28] *Quid Sophocles, & Theſpis, &c.*
[29] *Creditur, ex* medio, *&c.*

* Mr. Waller about this time, with the E. of Dorſet, Mr. Godolphin, and others, tranſlated the Pompey of Corneille; and the more correct French Poets began to be in reputation.

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Obſerve how ſeldom ev'n the beſt ſucceed:
Tell me if Congreve's Fools are Fools indeed?
What pert low Dialogue has Farqu'ar writ!
How Van wants grace, who never wanted wit!
The ſtage how looſely does * Aſtræa tread,
Who fairly puts all Characters to bed:
And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,
To make poor Pinky eat with vaſt applauſe!
But fill their purſe, our Poet's work is done,
Alike to them, by Pathos or by Pun.

[30] O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of Praiſe;
With what a ſhifting gale your courſe you ply;
For ever ſunk too low, or born too high!
Who pants for glory finds but ſhort repoſe,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows!
Farewel the ſtage! if juſt as thrives the Play,
The ſilly bard grows fat, or falls away.

[31] There ſtill remains to mortify a Wit,
The many-headed Monſter of the Pit:

[30] *Quem tulit ad ſcenam, &c.*
[31] *Sæpe etiam audacem fugat, &c.*

* Afra Behn, Authoreſs of ſeveral obſcene Plays, &c.

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A ſenſe-leſs, worth-leſs, and unhonour'd crowd;
Who to diſturb their betters mighty proud,
Clatt'ring their ſticks, before ten lines are ſpoke,
Call for the Farce, the Bear, or the Black-joke.
For Farce the people true delight affords,
Farce, long the taſte of Mobs, but now of Lords;
(Taſte, that eternal wanderer, which flies
From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes.)
The Play ſtands ſtill; damn action and diſcourſe,
Back fly the ſcenes, and enter foot and horſe;
Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
Peers, Heralds, Biſhops, Ermin, Gold, and Lawn;
The Champion too! and, to complete the jeſt,
* Old Edward's Armour beams on Cibber's breaſt!
[32] With laughter ſure Democritus had dy'd,
Had he beheld an Audience gape ſo wide.
Let Bear or Elephant be e'er ſo white,
The people, ſure, the people are the ſight!

Ah

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[32] *Si foret in terris, &c.*

* The Coronation of Henry the Eighth and Queen Anne Boleyn, in which the Playhouſes tried with each other to repreſent all the pomp of a Coronation. In this noble contention, the Armour of one of the Kings of England was borrowed from the Tower, to dreſs the Champion.

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Ah luckleſs Poet! ſtretch thy lungs and roar,
That Bear or Elephant ſhall heed thee more;
While all its throats the Gallery extends,
And all the Thunder of the Pit aſcends!
Loud as the Wolves on *Orcas' ſtormy ſteep,
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep.
Such is the ſhout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat,
Or when from Court a birth-day ſuit beſtow'd
Sinks the loſt Actor in the tawdry load.
Booth enters —— hark! the Univerſal Peal!
"But has he ſpoken?" Not a ſyllable.
"What ſhook the ſtage, and made the people ſtare?
Cato's long Wig, flowr'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.
[33] Yet leſt you think I rally more than teach,
Or praiſe malignly Arts I cannot reach,
Let me for once preſume t'inſtruct the times,
To know the Poet from the Man of Rymes:

'Tis

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[33] *Ac ne forte putes, me, &c.*

* *Orcas' ſtormy ſteep.*] The farthest Northern Promontory of Scotland, oppoſite to the Orcades.

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'Tis He, who gives my breaſt a thouſand pains,
Can make me feel each Paſſion that he feigns,
Inrage, compoſe, with more than magic Art,
With Pity, and with Terror, tear my heart;
And ſnatch me, o'er the earth, or thro' the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.

[34] But not this part of the poetic ſtate
Alone, deſerves the favour of the Great:
Think of thoſe Authors, Sir, who would rely
More on a Reader's ſenſe, than Gazer's eye.
Or who ſhall wander where the Muſes ſing?
Who climb their Mountain, or who taſte their ſpring?
How ſhall we fill * a Library with Wit,
When † Merlin's Cave is half unfurniſh'd yet?

[35] My Liege! why Writers little claim your thought,
I gueſs; and, with their leave, will tell the fault:
We Poets are (upon a Poet's word)
Of all mankind, the creatures moſt abſurd:

The

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[34] *Verum age, & his, &c.*
[35] *Multa quidem nobis, &c.*

* *Munus Apolline dignum.*] The Palatine Library then building by Auguſtus.
† *Merlin's Cave.*] A Building in the Royal Gardens of Richmond, where is a ſmall, but choice Collection of Books.

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The ſeaſon, when to come, and when to go,
To ſing, or ceaſe to ſing, we never know;
And if we will recite nine hours in ten,
You loſe your patience, juſt like other men.
Then too we hurt our ſelves, when to defend
A ſingle verſe, we quarrel with a friend;
Repeat unaſk'd; lament, the Wit's too fine
For vulgar eyes, and point out ev'ry line.
But moſt, when ſtraining with too weak a wing,
We needs will write Epiſtles to the King;
And from the moment we oblige the town,
Expect a Place, or Penſion from the Crown;
Or dubb'd Hiſtorians by expreſs command,
T' enroll your triumphs o'er the ſeas and land;
Be call'd to Court, to plan ſome work divine,
As once for Loüis, Boileau and Racine.

[37] Yet think, great Sir! (ſo many Virtues ſhown)
Ah think, what Poet beſt may make them known?
Or chuſe at leaſt ſome Miniſter of Grace,
Fit to beſtow the Laureat's weighty place.

[37] *Sed tamen eſt operæ pretium, &c.*

[37] Charles, to late times to be tranſmitted fair,
Aſſign'd his figure to Bernini's care;
And great Naſſau to Kneller's hand decreed
To fix him graceful on the bounding Steed:
So well in paint and ſtone they judg'd of merit:
But Kings in Wit may want diſcerning ſpirit.
The Hero William, and the Martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore, and one penſion'd Quarles;
Which made old Ben, and ſurly Dennis ſwear,
"No Lord's anointed, but a Ruſſian Bear."

[38] Not with ſuch Majeſty, ſuch bold relief,
The Forms auguſt of King, or conqu'ring Chief,
E'er ſwell'd on Marble; as in Verſe have ſhin'd
(In poliſh'd Verſe) the Manners and the Mind.
Oh! could I mount on the Mæonian wing,
Your Arms, your Actions, your Repoſe to ſing!
What ſeas you travers'd! and what fields you fought!
Your Country's Peace, how oft, how dearly bought!
How barb'rous rage ſubſided at your word,
And Nations wonder'd while they dropp'd the ſword!

How,

[37] *Gratus Alexandro regi Magno, &c.*
[38] *Nec magis expreſſi vultus, &c.*

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How, when you nodded, o'er the land and deep,
Peace ſtole her wing, and wrapt the world in ſleep;
Till Earth's extremes your mediation own,
And Aſia's Tyrants tremble at your Throne —
But Verſe alas! your Majeſty diſdains;
And I'm not us'd to Panegyric ſtrains:
The Zeal of Fools offends at any time,
But moſt of all, the Zeal of Fools in ryme.
Beſides, a fate attends on all I write,
That when I aim at praiſe, they ſay I bite.
A vile Encomium doubly ridicules;
There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools;
If true, a woful likeneſs, and if lyes,
" Praiſe undeſerv'd is ſcandal in diſguiſe: "
Well may he bluſh, who gives it, or receives;
And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
(Like Journals, Odes, and ſuch forgotten things
As Euſden, Philips, Settle, writ of Kings)
Cloath ſpice, line trunks, or flutt'ring in a row,
Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Sohoe.

[39] *Nil moror officium quod me gravat, &c.*

F I N I S.

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